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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3209  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2172  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2291  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0823  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1568  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1926  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2347  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4778  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1437  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000628

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR GGARLAND  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS  
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/22/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI OPTIMISTIC ABOUT SHARING POWER DURING A  
TRANSITION

REF: HARARE 625 AND PREV.

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Katherine Dhanani for reason: 1.4(d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On July 22 MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai briefed Charge on his July 21 meetings with Mugabe, Mbeki and Mutambara. Tsvangirai said he and Mugabe met one-on-one for 90 minutes, agreeing to a transition of no more than two years during which each would hold a position of equal weight. He said negotiators would travel to South Africa July 23 to begin talks, and he appeared optimistic that they could succeed fairly quickly. Despite Tsvangirai's optimism, Post remains concerned that even if ZANU-PF commits to share power on paper, it will not do so in practice. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Tsvangirai explained to Charge how events unfolded on July 21. He said before the public signing of the MOU, the four principals (Mbeki, Mutambara, Tsvangirai and Mugabe) met. This was the first time Tsvangirai and Mugabe had met in a decade. Tsvangirai reported that he raised the issue of violence and that Mugabe responded defensively, claiming that there had been no violence except in fanciful western media reporting. Mugabe demanded evidence, and Tsvangirai and Mugabe are supposed to meet on July 24 for Tsvangirai to present evidence of violence. Following the signing of the MOU and the subsequent press conference, Mbeki took Mutambara away and urged Mugabe and Tsvangirai to talk. The two ate dinner together while talking one-on-one for about 90 minutes.

¶3. (C) Tsvangirai said he told Mugabe over dinner that all Zimbabweans respected the sacrifices of those who participated in the liberation struggle and would honor Mugabe's legacy. However, he noted the undeniable current economic and political crisis required a response. He once again talked of violence, noting that Mugabe may not have been aware, and said Mugabe responded that any violence was in the past and now was the time to move forward. Tsvangirai said he and Mugabe then agreed that they should instruct their negotiators to craft an agreement that included a transition in no more than two years and provided roles for

both principals in which neither was subordinate to the other, with separate heads of state and government. Tsvangirai said he suggested Mugabe could retire in two years, but Mugabe bristled, saying that would be up to his party.

¶4. (C) After dinner the four principals reassembled and Tsvangirai briefed Mbeki and Mutambara on the agreement for transition. All agreed that this should provide the framework and that negotiators could work out detailed arrangements. (COMMENT: Tsvangirai made no mention of the division of power in cabinet. END COMMENT.) Negotiators will travel to South Africa on July 23 and begin work.

¶5. (C) Tsvangirai said he had discussed new U.S. sanctions with NSC Director and suggested the USG present them publicly as a way to keep pressure on the negotiations, to be relaxed if the negotiations bear fruit. Charge told Tsvangirai that the USG and other donors would look critically at any agreement reached; there would be no automatic reengagement. She asked Tsvangirai if the re-opening of humanitarian space had been part of the discussions on July 22. He said that he planned to raise this on July 24 as one of three critical issues, along with violence and ZANU-PF efforts to entice MDC MPs to switch sides.

¶6. (C) Tsvangirai said he and other MDC leaders were hopeful that a real breakthrough could be achieved. He noted that during their one-on-one, Mugabe showed none of the bluster and bravado he is known for. Charge commented that Mugabe's

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inner circle may be less conciliatory, and Tsvangirai commented with some satisfaction that he understood many of them were worried that Mugabe had sold them out during the one-on-one.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: Tsvangirai's hopefulness, and the good cheer exhibited by other MDC leaders who were leaving Tsvangirai's residence as Charge arrived, suggest that there may be an agreement reached in a matter of weeks in South Africa. While Post may be somewhat more optimistic than we were previously (reftel) about the prospects for an agreement, we remain deeply skeptical about whether ZANU-PF is ready to sacrifice the reins of power. END COMMENT.

Dhanani